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IN HIS  
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EUGENE FIELD.

(Taken in 1895.)



EUGENE FIELD  
IN HIS HOME

BY  
IDA COMSTOCK BELOW



NEW YORK  
E. P. DUTTON & COMPANY  
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1900

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AFFECTIONATELY INSCRIBED TO THE  
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## PREFACE.

**I**N drawing aside the curtain to allow the world to see the private life of Eugene Field, I have endeavored to give a pen picture of that gifted writer just as he lived and worked among those nearest and dearest ; to show something of the beauty of his great talents, his happy, mirthful nature, his childlike simplicity, as blended into the life of an earnest, ardent student and author.

Love was the bread he "cast upon the waters," and love has returned to him a thousand-fold.



## ILLUSTRATIONS.

PORTRAIT OF EUGENE FIELD	<i>Frontispiece</i>
BIRTHPLACE OF EUGENE FIELD . . . . .	1
COAT-OF-ARMS . . . . .	3
MARTIN FIELD . . . . .	4
EUGENE FIELD'S GRANDMOTHER . . . . .	6
ROSWELL MARTIN FIELD . . . . .	12
EUGENE FIELD AND HIS MOTHER . . . . .	16
LIBRARY IN EUGENE FIELD'S HOME . . . . .	62
MRS. FIELD . . . . .	64
EUGENE FIELD, JR. ("PINNY") . . . . .	67
MARY FRENCH FIELD ("TROTTY") . . . . .	69
FREDERICK FIELD ("DAISY") . . . . .	70
"SISSY KNOTT" . . . . .	77
THE BOYS OF "THE BALLAD OF THE WALLER LOT" . . . . .	77
THE HOME OF EUGENE FIELD . . . . .	86
ROOM WHERE EUGENE FIELD WROTE. . . . .	93
ROSWELL FRANCIS FIELD ("POSY") . . . . .	94
"POSY" AS BUFFALO BILL . . . . .	98
RUTH GRAY FIELD ("SISTER GIRL") . . . . .	102





## INTRODUCTION.

THERE was a man who was lately alive, and who is now dead, and whom I knew almost as well as one man may come to know another. From the time of our entrance into the work of helping to make newspapers and of writing generally, we were, in one sense, together up to the time of his death. Somewhat the elder of the two, I was at first a censor and later an admirer. We worked long together in one city, then separated, then came together again, though connected with different journals, and, after the lapse of years, more or

less eager in differing fields of work. But the closeness and the companionship and mutual suggestion and assistance never ceased until, one morning, there swiftly permeated Chicago the hurting message that Eugene Field was dead.

There is no question in my mind now that in the literary world the greatly deserving living are unfortunate, in that, while the heart beats and the chest heaves, what has been earned is denied to them in its fullness. Eugene Field living, while loved because those who read what he had written could not help that, received but a part of the recognition and the ease in life which were overdue to him. Eugene Field,

dead, attained, at once, something like his just rank among human beings. A great church was thronged when the preacher said words above the body in the casket. There was a sudden pressing together of rich men, neglectful before, who had known the poet slightly, and who now, with the keen instinct for a type, recognizing his promotion before the world, were eager to be known as his friends. There was a funeral procession which was a pageant. A little of all this in life would have been of great comfort to the man who has gone where dollars and cents are not in circulation. Such thoughts as these the heaped-up funeral flowers often

suggest. This is a world somewhat grim in its shadows.

From good, clean, notable blood on both ancestral sides, came this great writer of the Mississippi Valley. Reserved in some ways, yet reckless, with the buoyancy of temperament which comes from a keen sense of humor, he was, at the same time, a man of judgment and keen perception, though not among the pence-getters. I presume Tom Hood was somewhat like him. He was watchful, though, in the midst of his buoyancy, and shrewd and careful and energetic in working for his friends or for what he considered right. There were tossing whitecaps on the river

and ten thousand laughing ripples, but, underneath, the current was strong and swift and its course was well defined. One of the greatest among American writers was Eugene Field, but he was not greater in what he wrote than he was in his own personality — something exquisite and noble.

Eugene Field was earnest in his literary work. He always had some poem or sketch to talk over with his near friends, and was ever seeking fuller and finer expression. Self-satisfaction and complacency were unknown to him. Always he was striving to do good work, and he was full of plans for the future. He was generous of himself and stinted

in no way his offerings to the world.

Time must winnow the written laurels that this author flung around him. Two things remain, his shining passages of humor, kindly as the sun, and his songs and poems of children. It is a peculiar and sacred tribute to him that he is enshrined in the heart of childhood.

With all his tenderness, Eugene Field was of a stalwart, manly nature. Other men, his friends, could trust him in emergency. With the beloved of children died one, the honored and regarded of strong men.

STANLEY WATERLOO.





BIRTHPLACE OF EUGENE FIELD.

Page 1.



# EUGENE FIELD IN HIS HOME

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## CHAPTER I.

“ If, instead of a gem, or even a flower, we would cast the gift of a lovely thought into the heart of a friend, that would be giving as the angels give.”

MACDONALD.

**I**N St. Louis, Missouri, September 3, 1850, a son was born to Roswell Martin and Frances (Reed) Field. Only a baby ! with wonderful blue eyes, but with a soul laden with the gift of poetry—destined to give to the world those beautiful gems of thought, that have solaced the weary, and gladdened the hearts of all childhood.

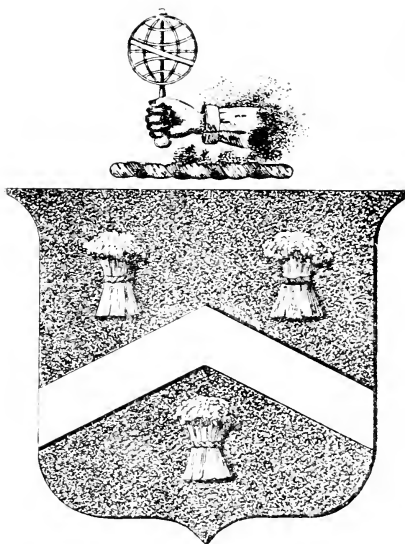
He was particularly blessed in

his parentage and in his ancestors, since for several generations the Fields had been prominent as men and women of fine mental gifts.

The genealogy of the family is traced back as far as the fifteenth century. Formerly the name was spelled "de la Feld," meaning lands where trees had been felled, in contradistinction to wood or forest land. During the fourteenth century, the prefix "de la" was dropped in consequence of the wars with France having made it unpopular, and the name Field generally substituted.

John Field, the astronomer, the most illustrious known ancestor of the family, was born in London in





Arms of John Field, the Astronomer

1520, and was a contemporary of Copernicus ; the latter died in 1543, and his great work on the *Revolutions of the Celestial Orbs* was published the same year. In 1556, John Field published the first astronomical tables, calculated on the basis of the Copernican discoveries, that ever appeared in England. He received a patent for this service, and Philip and Mary authorized him "to bear as a crest over his family arms" what in the language of heraldry is described as "a dexter arm, habited gules, issuing from clouds fessewise proper, holding an armillary sphere or. The golden sphere indicates the splendor of the Copernican discovery." The origi-

nal family arms were "sable, a chevron between three wheat sheaves argent." Eugene Field used only the original coat-of-arms as his book-plate.

Zachariah Field, grandson of the astronomer, the first of the family to emigrate to America, arrived here about 1630. He settled in Dorchester, and was largely engaged in trade with the Indians, his children and grandchildren being identified with the early history of New England.

Gen. Martin Field, grandfather of Eugene, was born in Leverett, Mass., February 12, 1773; he was a graduate of Williams College, and afterward received the honor-



MARTIN FIELD.

Page 4.





ary degree of A.M. from Dartmouth College. He was gifted in speech, with a very gracious manner; and that, accompanied by flashes of wit and stirring ridicule, gave him peculiar power, and rendered him both popular and distinguished as a jury advocate. He was a skilful musician; and upon relinquishing his practice of the law, gave time and study to the collecting of minerals, and by his great perseverance and industry gathered together what was at that time regarded as one of the rarest and most extensive cabinets of minerals in the State. It was afterward given by his widow to Middlebury College. He was a

great lover of Nature, and found the solace of his declining years in studying her wondrous plans.

His wife, Esther Smith Kellogg, the grandmother of whom Eugene wrote in *The Ladies' Home Journal*, was a lineal descendant of that grim old Puritan, Lieut. Samuel Smith, who came from Ipswich, England, to Boston in 1634. He occupied important positions both in Church and State, and was possessed of great energy and an indomitable will; and it is said of him, that "he impressed upon his descendants, for generations, his peculiar marked characteristics."

His daughter inherited much of that vigor and strength which



EUGENE FIELD'S GRANDMOTHER.

Page 6.



made her untiring in all her labors and faithful in the discharge of every duty. Her excellent judgment gave her prominence in the Church, and her fine self-control and commanding presence, accompanied by an accurate estimate of human nature, made her a most estimable wife and mother. It was to her home in Newfane, Vermont, that Eugene was wont to go to spend his vacations and gather strength and vigor,—perhaps as much from her care as from the fine country air.

The following sermon, written by Eugene when only nine years old, is undoubtedly the outcome of her teachings, and is certainly a

very remarkable production for a child of nine years to achieve. We give it without corrections or alterations :

“Notes of Sermon by E. (P.) Field. [Eugene at one time tried to add P. to his name.]

“Text in Prov. Chap. 13. Verse 15.

“The life of a christian is often compared to a race that is hard & to a battle in which a man must fight hard to win, these comparisons have prevented many from becoming christians.

“But the bible does not compare the christians path as one of hard labor. But Solomon says Wisdoms ways are ways of pleasantness and

all her paths are peace. Under the word transgressor are included all those that disobey their maker or in shorter words the ungodly. Every person looking around him will see many who are transgressors and whose lot is very hard.

“I remark secondly that conscience makes the way of transgressors hard; for every act of pleasure every act of Guilt his conscience smites him. The last of his stay on earth will appear horrible to the beholder. Sometimes however he will be stayed in his guilt. A death in a family of some favorite object or be attacked by some disease himself is brought to the portals of the grave Then for a lit-

tle time perhaps, he is stayed in his wickedness but before long he returns to his worldly lust. Oh it is indeed hard for sinners to go down into perdition over all the obstacles which God has placed in his path. But many I am afraid do go down into perdition for wide is the gate and broad is the way that leadeth to destruction and many there be that go in thereat.

“ Suppose now there was a fearful precipice and to allure you there your enemies should scatter flowers on its dreadful edge. Would you if you knew that while you were strolling about on that awful rock that night would settle down on you and that you would fall from



that giddy height would you I say go near that dreadful rock? Just so with the transgressor he falls from that height just because he wishes to appear good in the sight of the world. But what will a man gain if he gain the whole world and lose his own Soul."

Roswell Martin Field (son of Gen. Martin Field) — Eugene's father—was born in Newfane, Vermont, February 22, 1807. He was a very remarkable man; entering Middlebury College at eleven years of age, in the autumn of 1818, and graduating in 1822. He was admitted to the Bar in September, 1825, at the age of eighteen. His elder brother was also a lawyer,

and very amusing stories are told of the two brothers taking opposite sides to their father, and thus worrying and teasing him. In a letter from Gen. Martin Field to his daughter, he complains of the levity of his two sons, Charles K. and Roswell Martin, then at college, and expresses "great fear that their pranks and capers will entirely destroy the peace of the family"; and discourses at length upon "the ingratitude of children." In view of the prominent positions occupied later by both sons, it is shown that his fears were but over-anxiety.

Roswell Martin Field represented the town of Newfane in the General Assembly of the State



ROSWELL MARTIN FIELD.

Page 12.



during the years 1835 and 1836. He was elected State's Attorney for several years, and while a member of the Legislature he wrote a very able report in favor of abrogating the rule of the common law excluding atheists from giving testimony in courts of justice, which failed of adoption then, but was afterward taken up by the Hon. Loyal C. Kellogg and became a law.

In 1839, he removed to St. Louis, Missouri. He was a finished scholar, and read Greek, Latin, French, German, and Spanish, besides having an extensive knowledge of English literature and science. On account of his

knowledge of foreign languages, he was often employed for the purpose of correcting errors of interpreters in their translations of the testimony of foreigners who could not speak English.

It was as a lawyer that he won his greatest distinction, when he contended with such men as Geyer, Gamble, and Bates. His first distinction at the Bar was in cases involving the intricate old Spanish claims, and he gained a national reputation in the famous Dred Scott case.

He was among the calm, loyal, patriotic men who influenced public action in the dark days of the Rebellion, and saved both city and

State. In social life he was genial and witty, and refined in manner and deportment. He was generous to a fault, sincere and frank ; but utterly devoid of ambition for power or place, always modest in all he did, never caring to excite envy. His colleagues said of him : " Had he been more active and ambitious, he might have had a national reputation."

He married Frances Reed, of St. Louis, Missouri, formerly of Windham County, Vermont. The facts concerning the genealogy of the Field family are taken from *A Genealogical History of Gen. Martin Field and his English and American Ancestors*, by Chas.

Kellogg Field, brother of Eugene's father.

Eugene inherited his love of children from his father, who was wont to gather all the children of the neighborhood about him while he played for them upon his violin.

His mother (Frances Reed) was a very handsome woman, possessed of great strength of character, which was accompanied by rare sweetness and gentleness. Although only a boy of six when he lost his mother, he said: "I have carried the remembrance of her gentle voice and soothing touch all through my life." I am sure that sainted memory was ever an inspiration to him.





EUGENE FIELD AND HIS MOTHER (FRANCES REED FIELD).



One can easily imagine the sorrow of such a child for the loss of such a mother. It was only in later years, however, that he gave expression to his heart-longing for her, in the beautiful lines :

## TO MY MOTHER.

How fair you are, my mother !

Ah, though 't is many a year  
Since you were here,  
Still do I see your beauteous face,  
And with the glow  
Of your dark eyes cometh a grace  
Of long ago.

So gentle, too, my mother !

Just as of old, upon my brow,  
Like benedictions now,  
Falleth your hand's touch ;

And still, as then,  
A voice that glads me overmuch  
Cometh again,  
My fair and gentle mother !

How you have loved me, mother,  
I have not power to tell,  
Knowing full well  
That even in the rest above  
It is your will  
To watch and guard me with your  
love,  
Loving me still.

And as of old, my mother,  
I am content to be a child,  
By mother's love beguiled  
From all these other charms ;  
So to the last  
Within thy dear protecting arms  
Hold thou me fast,  
My guardian angel, mother.

As Eugene developed from the sweet baby to the child, he was very precocious and learned rapidly, but his progress was checked somewhat by ill health.

Upon the death of his mother in 1856, he and his younger brother, Roswell Martin Field, were given to the care of a cousin, Miss Mary Field French, of Amherst, Massachusetts, who discharged her duty toward them most faithfully and lovingly, and did much to brighten the lives of these motherless little boys.

The dedication in *A Little Book of Western Verse* is a fitting tribute of love to one who filled so well the mother's place.

DEDICATION IN "A LITTLE BOOK OF  
WESTERN VERSE."

A dying mother gave to you  
Her child a-many years ago ;  
How in your gracious love he grew,  
You know, dear, patient heart, you know.

The mother's child you fostered then  
Salutes you now, and bids you take  
These little children of his pen  
And love them for the author's sake.

To you I dedicate this book,  
And, as you read it line by line,  
Upon its faults as kindly look  
As you have always looked on mine.

Tardy the offering is and weak ;—  
Yet were I happy if I knew  
These children had the power to speak  
My love and gratitude to you.

Miss French procured the best instructors to be found in New England, and always saw that the little protégés knew their lessons well.

Through the kindness of Mr. Tufts, we are able to get a glimpse of Eugene's boyhood.

Among his playfellows, he was a natural leader and prime favorite ; continually devising new sports, and by his wit and geniality giving zest to the old plays.

In his early boyhood, he was original and full of resource in his fun and jests ; which were given and received good-naturedly, though oftentimes rather severe. Occasionally, however, his playmates showed

some resentment at his persistent drollery at their expense.

With great industry and painstaking, he prepared a paper for publication ; then, being made to understand that many of the articles were too personal, and might wound the feelings of the parties referred to, he cheerfully destroyed the labor of weeks.

He excelled in conversational power, indulging in sharp witticisms that were always amusing, but manifested no special taste either for reading or writing poetry. If, as Wordsworth says, "the child is father to the man," the qualities which afterward made him so distinguished were not discernible at



that time ; yet one might discover some traces of Eugene Field the man in Eugene the boy. Fun-loving, frank, and cordial in manner, enjoying to the utmost simple pleasures and pastimes, with a thorough dislike of pretence and affectation, he always held the highest respect and appreciation for that which was elevating and ennobling.

In most eminent men, their work seems the legitimate outcome of their early life, but Eugene's excellence was not only greater than could be anticipated, as the work of a genius usually is, but also different from the indications of his youth.

Any intelligent person acquaint-

ed with the boy would see great possibilities in his future, and expect distinction, under favorable circumstances, from so much life, originality, and versatility.

From what is generally known of him as a boy, he is deserving of great credit for his self-control and his persistent effort in correcting his youthful faults and perfecting his work. He seems to have formed his literary tastes gradually as his mind and character developed,—the fire of genius, smouldering so long, at last burst forth in his matchless verse.

Eugene's first leave-taking of his gentle foster-mother, Miss French, at the age of fifteen, was to attend

the private school of the Rev. James Tufts of Monson, Massachusetts, where he was fitted for Williams College, which institution he entered as a Freshman in 1868.

In 1869, on account of the death of his father, he left Williams College.

When one contemplates the love of Eugene's father for all children, it seems pathetic in the extreme that circumstances should compel him to be separated from his two sons during the greater part of their childhood, and that, just as their lives were rounding into a promising manhood, death should destroy the long-cherished hope of an earthly family reunion.

The same year, Eugene entered the Sophomore class of Knox College, Galesburg, Illinois, where his guardian, John W. Burgess (now of Columbia College, New York), was one of the corps of professors. Judge M. L. Gray, of St. Louis, Missouri, was made executor of the estate. He had been a close friend of the elder Mr. Field, and, himself having no children, these two bright boys, left orphans so young in life, took a great hold upon his heart. His home was ever open to them, and they came to look upon him as a second father.

Mrs. Gray, with her keen insight and fine intellectual qualities, was

ever a wise counsellor and faithful friend, and I am sure that Eugene always felt her gentle influence as one of the inspirations of his life:

Judge Gray's memory is stored with anecdotes of the pranks Eugene played. At one time he came to him for money; Judge Gray tried to remonstrate with him, saying that he was spending more than his income would warrant, whereupon Eugene replied that he must have money, and if it could not be raised upon his property, he would go upon the stage and take for his *nom de plume* "M. L. Gray." Of course the money was forthcoming.

Both Judge and Mrs. Gray

watched with great pleasure the rapid development of Eugene's mind; and when the star of his genius began to rise before the admiring gaze of men, it was delightful to see with what pride and pleasure these guardians of his youth welcomed its light.

Their love and friendship, continuing through so many years, were more highly prized by Eugene than almost anything I can mention, and he has given expression to this feeling in the dedication in verse to Mr. Gray, in *Echoes from the Sabine Farm*.

When Mrs. Gray was called from her usefulness in this world to her life above, he wrote a most

beautiful tribute to her memory, which was privately printed in book form and given by Judge Gray to their many friends. Death is robbed of its terror by such lines : " They saw upon her glorified face no shadow of the Valley, but the shining light of the Eternal City, and through the window streamed the summer sunshine ; and it was morning ! "

The story has been widely circulated that Eugene's father left him a large fortune. This is not true : the estate was mostly in realty, and, although it made a large showing, realized a comparatively small sum for each of the sons.

Much also has been said of his extravagance, but this, too, has been greatly exaggerated. Perhaps this exaggeration came from the fact that his manner of spending money was different from that of most people. He had rather simple tastes (except in books), and was most abstemious in his daily habits. Yet he would give his last penny and hours of labor to carry out some eccentric scheme to entertain and amuse his friends; or to buy some toy to gladden the heart of a child.

It had been a theory of their cousin, Miss French, who cared for them after their mother's death, that it was better to keep the boys



in separate schools. There was always, however, a love between them that was ideal, and after they grew to an age when they could choose for themselves, Eugene left Galesburg and went to Columbia, Missouri, to attend the State University, in order to be with his brother.

At this time he was splendidly equipped in Latin, as well as in all the ordinary English branches, and had reached an age when he felt himself quite his own master. Studies difficult to others were mere play to him, and, as a consequence, much of his time was spent in fun and frolic. His vivacity, his sparkling wit, his keen sense of

humor, and his wonderful ability to attract people to himself, made him the life of every social gathering.

My first meeting with Eugene Field was when on a visit to my brother, who was also attending the University. And what pranks he played! Hiding the book I chanced to be reading, composing ballads about the young gentlemen who called, and when they appeared, seating himself at the piano and playing over the airs, while I was in terror lest he should sing the words he had made very personal.

Often in the afternoon, when he was supposed to be studying, his room would be filled with young ladies,—a dear old lady boarding in

the house acting as chaperone. He always kept a supply of good things on hand, and these little gatherings being very unique, invitations to them were eagerly sought.

At that time he did not call his writings *poetry*, but he always contrived to have, for the amusement of his guests, some humorous rhyme or funny anecdote that kept his friends in a roar of laughter. He also did some bright work on the bogus programs, which were exceedingly funny. He was in great demand for private entertainments and amateur theatricals, often writing parodies and comic songs for the occasion. One of his favorite songs was: "The Old Man."

The first verse is as follows :

“ When I was young and in my prime,  
I was kissing the girls the most of my  
time,  
And if any girl here thinks she can fool  
me,  
She ’ll find me as young as I used to be.”

His personation of a jolly old man enhanced its value an hundred-fold, and showed to perfection his talents as a comedian.

During this visit, he revised and sang “ Comin’ thro’ the Rye,” personating a young lady. For this occasion, I drove five miles with him, to get an old-fashioned hoop-skirt ; and imagine my consternation, when, entering the principal street of the little town, he donned that obsolete adjunct of feminine

attire. The more I begged him to take it off, the faster he drove.

Ah! but there was a deeper, steadier current under the ripples of fun.

At the Commencement exercises he delivered an oration. How well I remember his pale face and deep voice, and the loud applause he elicited!

Later, when we all had bidden good-bye to dear old Columbia, he visited my brother at our home in St. Joseph, Missouri.

There he met for the first time my sister, Julia Sutherland Comstock, who was destined to be the chief inspiration of his life, then only a girl in short dresses.

I had my own sweetheart, so Eugene was often left with this little brown-eyed Julia, and we all remarked, "How well they get on together!" He often took her out for afternoon drives, and we thought how gallant he was to give so much pleasure to so young a girl when there were so many young ladies in the neighborhood.

What was our surprise when we found they had been "making hay in the sunshine," and he had told her the old, old story, and awakened in her innocent young heart a love that was to remain his very own until death did them part.

My father remonstrated, saying, "She is only a child"; whereupon

Eugene promised to go away to Europe for a year, then establish himself in business, and wait until Julia was eighteen. To this arrangement my father gave consent.

In the fall, he and my brother started for Europe, I accompanying them as far as New York, to visit relatives. After a short time my brother and I went to Amherst, Massachusetts, with Eugene, to visit his aunt and his cousin, Mary Field French.

Everyone welcomed him with delight back to the scenes of his boyhood ; and each evening, during our visit of a week, he was the centre of attraction at some social gathering.

We then returned to my relatives in New York, and the next day after our arrival Eugene was missing. A note soon came by mail, saying : " Important business has called me back to St. Joseph, Missouri ; I hope you will pardon my sudden leave-taking." Then we knew he had gone back on a journey of some fifteen hundred miles to spend a few more days with the little sweetheart he was leaving behind.

It has been stated that he spent a fortune upon the European trip that he took at this time, and also that he collected a large library while abroad. These statements are neither of them true, although



he jocosely states in his auto-analysis : " I visited Europe, spending six months and my patrimony in France, Italy, Ireland, and England." I do not think he brought home a dozen books, but he did bring a little Italian poodle, to which he was devoted and which he absurdly named " Sweeny." He taught the poodle to play hide-and-seek, and to lie down beside him while he sang the following nonsensical lines :

" Kiss daddy good-bye and shut little eye,  
Good little boys go to sleep,

Oui ! Oui !

Else a big bugaboo will come and catch  
you,

And then poor daddy will weep,

Oui ! Oui ! "

whereupon "Sweeny" went to sleep.

His love for animals was always a striking characteristic of his nature. When at school at Columbia, Missouri, a little black-and-tan dog called "Penny" was his almost constant companion.

While in Italy he came near being arrested for interfering with some Italians who were abusing a dog. An American lady driving along and seeing him and his companion, apparently Americans, in trouble, opened her carriage door and bade them enter quickly, when she drove rapidly away.

From Rome he wrote the following letter :

“ROME, ITALY, February the 22nd, 1873.

“EDGAR VANDERBURGH, Esqr.

“My dear sir,

“I believe I promised to write you once a week, when I left Lithgow, but if I have failed to do so, it has been not from any forgetfulness of you and yours, but from an overwhelming amount of care and duty. No, Lithgow is dear to me as ever! Her post-office and other public buildings (Episcopal church and Restaurant) are still fresh in my memory. And I recollect with a sigh the many pleasant walks (between the Post office and your residence) I enjoyed while in Lithgow last summer. Ah, those happy days

will never come again (a●tear) and you and I have had our last political discussion. For, since the collapse of the Greeley & Brown movement I have given over all hope of ever rescuing my torn and bleeding country from Grant and his minions, and have resolved to have nothing more to do with politics. Methinks, my country will groan to hear this declaration !

Your promising nephew and namesake, in imitation of the illustrious Cæsar, lies sick in Rome of a fever. He took to his bed day before yesterday and has complained of much pain and suffering. Last night he had a raging fever, which has been succeeded to-day by a raging

appetite, and inasmuch as he proposes to attend a masquerade ball this evening I do not consider his condition critical. Miss Amelia has probably kept you informed of our whereabouts. We have been two months in Nice, and a month or so travelling in Italy. Two weeks we passed in Naples, and a most delightful place we found it. Its natural situation is simply charming, though the climate is said to be very unhealthy. I climbed Vesuvius and peered cautiously into the Crater. It was a glorious sight—Nothing else like it in the world! Such a glorious smell of Brimstone! Such enlivening whiffs of hot steam and sulphuric fumes! Then too,

the grand veil of impenetrable white smoke that hung over the yawning abyss! No wonder people rave about this Crater and no wonder poor old Pliny lost his life in coming too near the fascinating monster. The ascent of Vesuvius is no mean undertaking and I advise all American parents to train their children especially for it, by drilling them daily upon their backyard ash-heaps. I was an hour climbing up the cone, which can be not more than fifteen hundred feet high. When I reached the 'happy top,' I felt as I think Alexander must have felt when he had conquered the world, though I will add, I sighed for no more such

conquests. Coming down the mountain is rare fun. The sand and ashes are so deep that the descent may be made upon a dead run. Clad in old garments and with my pedal extremities encased in my 'monitor gaiters,' I astonished the natives by my celerity and recklessness.

"I was much disappointed with Pompeii. It presents the appearance of an old-fashioned closely-built city, which has been burned down. But I must confess it is indeed wonderful when one contemplates the nicety and care with which the excavations have been made and the remarkable state of preservation in which the city has

been found. I could hardly realize, while walking through her silent streets, that, once the centre of so much wealth and prosperity, she had lain under the ashes and lava for eighteen centuries, unmissed and forgotten. But if I was disappointed with Pompeii, I was not so with Herculaneum, another buried city, of more wealth than Pompeii and with a larger population I believe. Pompeii, you remember, was overwhelmed with ashes, but Herculaneum was buried in a red-hot river of lava which poured from Vesuvius and swept down relentlessly upon the city, blotting it out from the history of the world for nineteen hundred years. This lava is now



one solid rock and upon it is built a new city, called Resina. The Italian government, however, have caused extensive excavations to be made, and out of the solid rock has been resurrected a part of the ill-fated city. We have been in Rome only a short while, but a sufficient time to have visited the principal places of interest. We have had pleasant weather until to-day, and this has been a 'wild day.' The Carnival is in full blast and I have become thoroughly disgusted with this never-ending display of dominos, peasant girls, Kings, priests, &c. &c. The city is very full at present. This is the fashionable season and visitors from all nations flock

hither at this time. We expect to go to Paris shortly, and where, from that city, 'I dinna care to tell.'

"I was much shocked to hear of poor Mr. Wheaton's death. I knew him only slightly, but even that short acquaintance won for him my respect and esteem. His untimely death must have been a sad affliction to you all.

"Please give my kind regards to Mrs. Vanderburgh, the young ladies, and *grandma*. And don't by any means forget to remember me tenderly yet respectfully to Bridget. Edgar joins in affectionate regards. Believe me, dear sir, with renewed assurances of esteem, &c. &c.

Yours very truly, EUGENE FIELD."

Upon his return from Europe, at the age of twenty-two, he associated himself with the St. Louis *Evening Journal*; it was there that his originality began to show itself in the unique ways he adopted to gain information and interview people.

The fact of his being at work in St. Louis, with his *fiancée* away in St. Joseph, did not particularly assist in the success of his new enterprise. His visits to the latter city were long and frequent; and at length, after much solicitation, my father consented to an early marriage. This occurred October 16, 1873, a short time before my sister was seventeen years old.

They settled in St. Louis, and

afterward the *Journal* sent Eugene to Jefferson City, the State capital, where he made many friends. His newspaper work was very congenial to him, and his advance was continuous. A fine offer from the *St. Joseph Gazette* brought him to that city in 1875; two children were born to him there,—Roswell Martin (named for Eugene's father and brother), who died at the age of two months, and Mary French, better known as "Trotty."

The death of his baby boy was the first great sorrow of his married life.

From St. Joseph he returned to St. Louis, in 1876, to accept a position as editorial writer on the

St. Louis *Journal* and St. Louis *Times*. Here his two sons, Melvin Gray (named for his lifelong friend and counsellor), and Eugene, Jr., nicknamed "Pinny," were born.

In 1880, he again bettered his condition by going to Kansas City as managing editor of the Kansas City *Times*, where he did some very bright newspaper work.

While in Kansas City he made a great social hit as Madam Jarley of wax-figure fame, in a private entertainment.

Here another son came to gladden his home. For several months he was a very delicate child. In the pale little face were set a pair of beautiful blue eyes which his father

said "always remind me of daisies peeping up from the grass"; hence came the name that has always clung to him, "Daisy."

From Kansas City the Fields removed to Denver in 1881, where Eugene became managing editor of the *Denver Tribune*. The life in the Western metropolis suited him admirably; and the different phases of human nature found in the Far West proved a field of study for his observant mind. Several of his best poems and character sketches illustrate this life.

While in Denver he wrote an article about the Governor of the State that was considered too personal and damaging, whereupon

Eugene was sued for libel. For days after, clever little squibs in Eugene's most satirical vein appeared in the *Tribune*, placing the Governor before the public in the most ridiculous light imaginable.

Shortly after this occurred I was visiting in Denver, and with a friend attended a basket lunch, where a basket filled with delicacies for two people, with a lady's card inside, was sold to the highest bidder. Thereupon the gentleman who bought it escorted the lady whose name appeared upon the card to a little *tête-à-tête* table provided with hot coffee, where they lunched together. You may guess my confusion when Governor —— was

presented to me ! It is needless to say our conversation did not include the promising Eugene as one of its subjects.

During this visit a lady related to me a conversation she overheard while sewing near an open window, which illustrates the Field characteristics.

Her children were playing on the lawn with several companions, among them a little girl from Richmond, Missouri. They all began relating wonderful tales, and this little girl said : " You ought to live in Richmond ! A circus came there this summer, and the animals all got out and are running around Richmond to this day."



“Trotty” Field, then six years old, opened her big blue eyes, and assuming a very wise air, said: “Oh! that’s nothing; my grandmother was eaten up by a lion.”

Oscar Wilde was making quite a stir in this country at that time. He was to lecture in Denver, and the *Tribune* had written him up favorably for several days, and was to give him a banquet. When the time came for his arrival he did not put in an appearance; and in order that they might not get the laugh on the newspaper, Eugene bought a wig with long flowing locks, and otherwise adorned himself to represent the hero of sunflower fame. He then procured

an open carriage, and drove up and down the streets of the city. The papers gave long accounts of Wilde's arrival, with extensive remarks upon his æsthetic appearance, when in truth he did not arrive in Denver until some time afterward.

Flattering inducements being offered farther east, Eugene sent his family to St. Louis, to stay with my mother until he could form definite plans for the future.

While there a little girl was born to them, the first child of theirs having the dark eyes and hair of the mother. She was named for her, and the delight of the family was as great as if she had been

the first baby. But in a few short weeks the angel of death folded this darling of the household in his arms, and the father, to whom this tiny copy of the mother would have been inexpressibly sweet and dear, could, alas! but know her as a tender, beautiful, white-winged thought.

It was in 1883 that he accepted a position as paragrapher for the Chicago *Daily News*, later changed to the Chicago *Record*. Up to this time, although quite widely known, he had not done much work of real literary value. He seemed to need all the varied experiences that had been his to fit

him for the work that now opened up before him. His originality of thought and expression soon brought him into great popularity, and it was not long before he had gained quite a reputation as a humorist.

Short stories began to appear in his column of "Sharps and Flats"; and he read extensively all the old legends and fairy stories to fire his imagination. About 1886 he wrote stories of greater length, weaving in little poems on quaint subjects.

His first published poem, in 1879, entitled "Christmas Treasures," in *A Little Book of Western Verse*, seems like the outpouring of a mother's heart. The senti-

ment that clung to those faded treasures is tenderness itself. It was doubtless called forth by the memory of his own dear first-born, although written several years after that child's death.

*The Tribune Primer*, published in Denver in 1882, was his first publication in book form. It was composed of short lessons like the following :

“THE PEACH.

“The Peach is hard and Green.  
He is Waiting for a child to come  
along and Eat him. When he gets  
into the child's little Stomach he  
will make things Hot for that  
Child. The Child Who eats the

Peach will Be an Angel before he Gets a Chance to Eat another. If there were no green Peaches there would not be so many Children - Sizes of Gold Harps in Heaven."

" MENTAL ARITHMETIC.

"How many Birds are there in Seven soft-boiled Eggs?

"If you have Five Cucumbers and eat Three, what will you have left? Two. No; you are wrong. You will have More than that. You will have Colic enough to double you up in a Bow Knot for Six Hours. You may go to the foot of the Class.

"A man had six Sons and Four

Daughters. If he had Six Daughters and Four Sons, how many more Sons than Daughters would He have had?

“If a Horse weighing 1600 pounds can Haul four tons of Pig Iron, how many seasons will a Front Gate painted Blue carry a young Woman on One Side and a young Man on the Other?”

The *Primer* has been long out of print, and few copies are to be found. Probably not more than seven or eight are in existence.

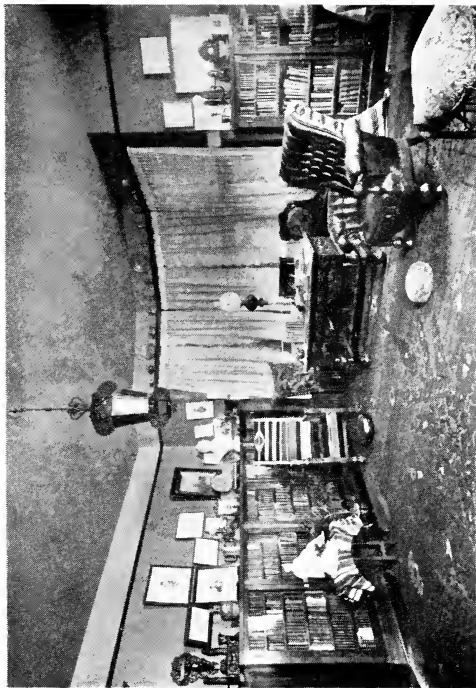
For many years he collected all the different books of fairy stories and folk-lore of the different countries; they were all placed in one

bookcase in his library, so that it is known as the "Fairy Corner."

His stories and poems were collected and published in 1896, under the titles of *A Little Book of Western Verse* and *A Little Book of Profitable Tales*.

It has been said of him that he turned out more first-class newspaper work than any other man in this country. Delicate health compelled him to go abroad in 1889 for rest and change. Being unwilling to be separated from his family, they accompanied him. The children were placed in a private school in Germany, while his wife remained with him in London. Her gentleness and indulgent care





LIBRARY IN EUGENE FIELD'S HOME.



seemed just what he needed to make him forget himself. Alone, in dim old London they lived over again the days of their youth, and once more were driving through the shady lanes around St. Joseph, Missouri, the place of their early courtship; Eugene tells you the story in "Lovers' Lane, St. Joe."

That she was the great inspiration of his life appears in the many poems written about her. "The Tea Gown" and "A Little Bit of a Woman" refer directly to her, as does also "Lizzie" and some of his stories.

The following poem, written in his exquisite, delicate handwriting, illuminated with varied colors, does

not appear in any of his books ; it speaks for itself :

A VALENTINE TO MY WIFE.

Accept, dear girl, this little token,  
 And, if between the lines you seek,  
 You 'll find the love I 've often spoken—  
 The love my dying lips shall speak.

Our little ones are making merry  
 O'er am'rous ditties rhymed in jest,  
 But in *these* words (though awkward—  
                     very)  
 The genuine article 's expressed.

You are as fair and sweet and tender,  
 Dear brown-eyed little sweetheart  
                     mine,  
 As when, a callow youth and slender,  
 I asked to be your Valentine.



MRS. EUGENE FIELD.



What though these years of ours be fleet-  
ing ?

What though the years of youth be  
flown ?

I'll mock old Tempus with repeating,  
"I love my love and her alone !"

And when I fall before his reaping,  
And when my stuttering speech is  
dumb,

Think not my love is dead or sleeping,  
But that it waits for you to come.

So take, dear love, this little token,  
And if there speaks in any line  
The sentiment I 'd fain have spoken,  
Say, will you kiss your Valentine ?

The beautiful work which he  
did in London while in such deli-  
cate health is truly wonderful.  
Nearly all of the *Second Book of  
Verse* was written there ; it em-

braces a broader range of subjects than any of his books.

While abroad, they lost their eldest son, Melvin Gray, in his thirteenth year. He was a splendid, manly boy, and this sorrow so weighed upon them that they returned home much sooner than they had expected. "Little Boy Blue" is generally supposed to have been suggested by the death of this son.

The "Little Boy Blues" all over the world had so touched the sympathetic chords of his poetical nature that his thought of them might properly be said to have crystallized into his most widely known poem.







EUGENE FIELD, JR. ("PINNY").

Page 67.

The dedication in *With Trumpet and Drum* refers to this son so delicately that to me it is among his sweetest thoughts.

In "Buttercup, Poppy, Forget-me-not," he twines a wreath about the life and the "falling asleep" of this child, so delicate and poetical, that grim death is entirely lost in its beauty.

"The Peace of Christmas Time" also refers to this sorrow.

His marked devotion to his son "Pinny" was very noticeable; many attributed this to his likeness to his mother; but this partiality never showed itself after the death of his eldest son, which seemed to show that each child,

no matter what its characteristic might be, was equally dear to him. Melvin was quiet, practical, and rather inclined to be serious, while "Pinny" was the very personification of fun and mischief, and possessed of a most daring spirit, accompanied by a very winsome personality,—all of which appealed to his father's fun-loving nature. His children afforded him great pleasure, although he often made them targets for his great propensity for teasing.

"Trotty" was of a rather serious turn of mind, and was often called "the child-mother," on account of her care and solicitude for the younger children. Some one asked





MARY FRENCH FIELD ( "TROTTY" ).

Reciting " LITTLE BOY BLUE. "

" Now, don't you go till I come, " he said.  
" And don't you make any noise ! "

her father, when she was quite young, how old she was. He replied, "A thousand years her next birthday."

He always considered her an unusual child, and often said, "It only needs opportunity to bring out latent talent"; which she has shown to be true in the work she has taken up since his death.

At the age of twelve she wrote a very original story; to please her, her father took her ideas and, enlarging upon them, sold the story for \$25, dividing the money with her.

"Pinny" often shared his father's room, and this little face pillowed beside him suggested the beautiful

poem so widely quoted, "Some-time."

The mother's devotion to Daisy, her baby for so many years, called forth the verses "To a Usurper." Many of the poems in *With Trumpet and Drum* were inspired by the older children—they were the "Pitty Pats" and "Tippy Toes"—while those in *Love Songs of Childhood* owe their charm to the two dear babies that came to gladden the last years of his life.

Their father was very original in his play with them. When Daisy was about four years old, he used to call himself a big blue bear, and Daisy a little rabbit, and they would take all sorts of imaginary trips





FREDERICK FIELD ("DAISY").

Page 70.



together. Upon one of these pretended journeys, they chanced to take a jelly cake made by one of their aunties, and falling in with an old witch, to propitiate her, gave her the cake, which caused her death, and broke the spell that had been cast upon them, and released them from the lower existence they had been forced to live. The following is a letter written to Daisy when absent from home on a visit :

“DEAR DADY :

“I met the old blue bear on the street yesterday. ‘Hullo,’ said he, ‘where is the little rabbit?’ ‘The little rabbit has gone to St.

Louis,' said I. 'I don't believe it,' said the old blue bear. Then the old blue bear went to tell the lion. Last night after I had gone to bed, the old blue bear, and the lion, and the elephant, and the flim flam, and the catamaran came and rang the door bell. I got up and let them in. 'What do you want?' I asked. 'We want to see whether the little rabbit has gone away,' said the old blue bear. Then they looked under the tables and in the bed and behind the doors and in every room but they could not find the little rabbit. Pretty soon they saw the stick horse. 'Where has the little rabbit gone?' asked the lion. 'He has gone to

St. Louis,' said the stick horse. 'Then we will go to St. Louis, too,' said the old blue bear. So they all started for St. Louis—the lion, the elephant, the flim flam, the catamaran and the old blue bear, and they took a big basketful of jelly cake to the little rabbit. You must tell me all about it when you come home. Goodbye.

“ PAPA.”

“ April 14th, 1885.”

Whether it comes from the peculiarly strong impressions made by constant familiar association with their father, or from their wonderful memory, it is surprising how well the two babies remember the little

ways he had of amusing them. Posy will take you by the hand and tell you how "Papa Gene" used to help him shoot a toy cat off the foot of the bed with his little gun, his papa having tied a silk thread to the cat so it might fall at the proper time. When Ruth was but a mere baby, she would tell you, "Papa say, 'Lamby go ma-a!'" imitating almost exactly his tone of voice. From the expression of their faces you can see they understand and remember far more of their father than they know how to tell.

Because of his playful, happy nature, and the close sympathy in which he lived with his children, he was enabled to portray the joys and

sorrows of all childhood as no other writer has been able to do.

The children who pleased him most were the quaint, old-fashioned ones, or the happy-go-lucky kind. It needed only the healthful, natural play of a child to call up the slumbering fancies of his brain.

One day he chanced to call upon a sweet little girl, entirely unspoiled by the luxuriousness of her surroundings, and found her dressing her pug-dog in baby clothes. The naturalness and artlessness of her play so pleased him that he sat down and wrote "The Sugar-Plum Tree," and dedicated it to her.

A bright, vivacious little friend complained of the moaning of the

wind, that frightened her so she could not sleep. He said, "Never mind, Annie, I will write about that old wind." You all know his "Night Wind."

His study, where he daily wrote his column of "Sharps and Flats," looked out upon the famous "Waller Lot." Glancing up from his work one day, he beheld its green surface spotted o'er with white tents, while Indians in war-paint and feathers stalked to and fro.

This was too much. What was "Sharps and Flats" to this mimic warfare? Away he sped. Who, pray, were the heroes of this fray? With glass in hand he spied them out, then watched the advance and



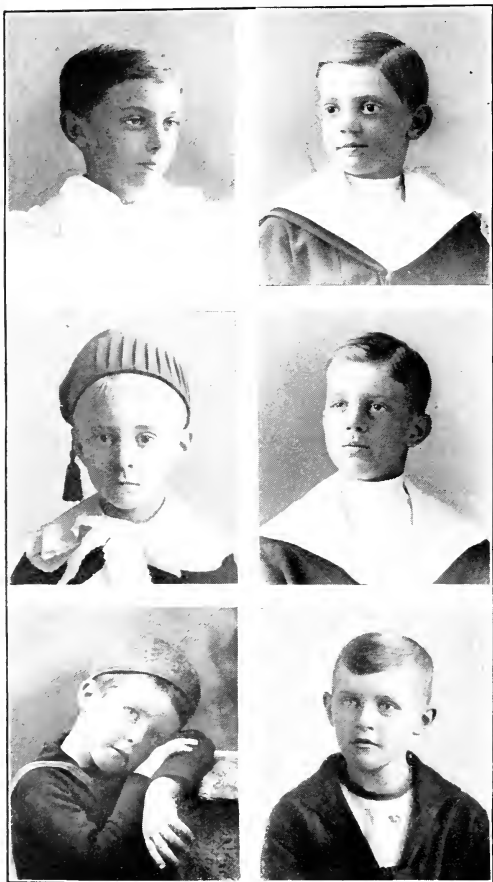




LUCY ALEXANDER KNOTT ("SISSY KNOTT").  
Heroine of "THE BALLAD OF THE WALLER LOT."

"Oh! never fiercer battle raged  
Upon the Waller lot,  
And never blood more freely flowed  
Than flowed for Sissy Knott."





THE BOYS OF "THE BALLAD OF THE WALLER LOT."

the retreat, until the whole strata-gem loomed up before him. But where was the heroine? When, lo, there came tripping along a charming little girl, all unconscious of the rhyme that was forming in his brain.

Next morning, instead of politics and the usual satires on the events of the day, appeared "The Delectable Ballad of the Waller Lot."

While his love and thoughtfulness for children was one of his greatest charms, both in his life and writings, he did more to elevate motherhood than any other writer of the present day.

The women he admired most were not the devotees of fashion,

nor even those of the higher literary attainments, unless they also best loved their own firesides and to rock the cradle. The mother-love is nowhere more beautifully portrayed than in the story of "Félice and Petit Poulain," where an old family horse is seized by the German soldiers while marching upon France, and driven many miles away; after a fierce battle, riderless and blood-stained, she gallops over the country back to the little colt she left behind, only to find him dead amid the ruins of the farmyard. I quote from that story this little tribute to our animal friends :

"There are those who say that

none but human-kind is immortal—that none but man has a soul. I do not make or believe that claim. There is that within me which tells me that nothing in this world and life of ours which has felt the grace of maternity shall utterly perish, and this I say in all reverence, and with the hope that I offend neither God nor man.”

Another link in the golden chain that has bound him to us so strongly, is the fact that he loved the world just as it was, finding in every person and in every thing something beautiful, and by some subtle power making one understand that he recognized the good and overlooked the evil.

In an interview which occurred in New York City several years ago, he was questioned as to his theories in regard to literature.

"I have no theory," he replied tersely. "I believe in letting every man do just what he wants to do. As for myself, I suppose I am a romanticist by nature. I love fancy, and my natural bent forces me to write my fanciful little stories and poems. I would n't, for instance, think of undertaking to write a novel, for I do not believe I'm built for a novelist, but in spite of my love for romance, I have no objection to realists, or to those writers who believe that they have been sent into the world to



reform it. 'Reform away,' I say ; but as for myself, the world is good enough for me as it is. ' You see I am a thorough optimist. In temperament, I 'm a little like old Horace,—I want to get all of the happiness out of the world that 's possible."

In speaking of his manner of writing, he said : " I can do my writing in the midst of the commercialism of Chicago as well as anywhere else ; that is, if I am in the mood for it. I can write prose at any time ; that consists merely in sitting down at a desk and grinding. But in order to write poetry, I have to be in the mood. Sometimes I am out of the mood for

weeks ; then when it comes back to me I write poem after poem, often with great rapidity and without a word of correction, occasionally several poems a day."

To illustrate this : when Posy was only a few months old, one of my sisters and myself paid a morning call at the house, and finding Posy restless, my sister asked to be allowed to take him from his cradle, and while hushing him in her arms with a soothing lullaby, Eugene came into the room. After a few pleasantries he left, returning in a very short time with the poem :

" The Rock-abye-Lady from Hushaby  
Street

Comes stealing, comes creeping," etc.

To tease my sister he dedicated it to a friend.

Had he only had the needed leisure, he would have left behind him more writings of a high literary value. While his newspaper work made him widely known, it kept him from giving full play to the delicate, fanciful, and poetical part of his nature. Every phase of life interested him; and that interest made him a favorite everywhere.

The brightness and spontaneity of his wit made it irresistible. It was never forced, but flashed out upon occasions as brightly, as suddenly, and usually as harmlessly, as flashes the distant lightning

against a summer evening's sky. It was of a quality exceedingly difficult to describe, but the following, written in a "Birthday Book," will serve, in a measure, to illustrate :

"Ladies, on the following pages,  
Write your names, but not your ages ;  
Only when she 's passed to heaven  
Should a woman's age be given."

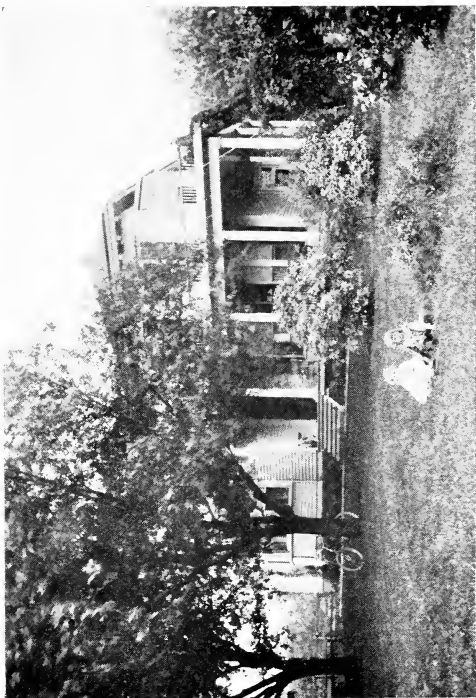
Upon his return from Europe in the winter of 1890, while still in poor health, and before he had resumed his newspaper work, a gentleman accosted him upon the street, saying : "When are we to have some more 'Sharps and Flats'?" Quick as thought came the reply, "The first of April."

His versatility was wonderful. He could go from the sad to the gay, from the sublime to the ridiculous, from the story of a rollicking boy to the sorrowing tale of lonely age, and often he would bring the smile to the lips while the tear still glistened in the eye.

In the *Echoes from the Sabine Farm*, his translations from Horace are quaint and humorous, whereas this poet is generally treated in a purely classic style by translators. It was love for his writings that caused him to name his home in North Chicago "The Sabine Farm," the home of his best-loved poet being in the Sabine country north of Rome.

While getting settled in their new house, the activity and bustle seemed to inspire new thoughts, and "The House" was written amid the sound of hammer and saw; but unfortunately the annoyances that come to all who build for themselves so perplexed him that he lost interest in the writing, and laid it aside without completing it.

Much was crowded into the last few months of his life. "The Bibliomaniac" seemed to spring from piles of books heaped in every corner, and he divided his time between writing and arranging his large library of nearly four thousand volumes. Amid all this



THE HOME OF EUGENE FIELD.

Page 86.





work he received his many friends with smiles and jests, paid happy little visits to his neighbors, worked upon his lawn, and found time to tease and amuse his babies.

His home was very dear to him, and its resemblance to the old New England places which he so loved in childhood, together with the pale green of the willows, and the twitter of the birds that seemed to know his voice, made for him an ideal spot in which to rest and dream.

It had been a long-cherished wish of his to write a *Mother Goose* founded upon Indian folklore; and he intended going to

Washington for the purpose of studying the books upon that subject kept in the Smithsonian Institution. What a unique work it would have been !

With his wonderful brain and all his charm of manner, it was, after all, his great-heartedness that won for him the love of the world.

He loved humanity and drank in the sunshine and beauties of nature until there blossomed therefrom the beautiful flower of his verse, and his scarcely less poetic prose. The parent stalk is dead, but the scattered leaves forever shall shed abroad their sweet perfume ; and the children for all time to come will bless the sweet spirit that gave

them so much joy. Of the many beautiful tributes paid him, none is perhaps more tenderly beautiful than the following:

“The memory of Eugene Field will be green when the pyramids have crumbled beneath the touch of time, and empires are forgotten. Hearts of untold millions have been filled and thrilled till they grew better and better in the sight of God and man by the tender charm of his happy thought. As humanity moves up, not down, the ages, the way grows brighter and brighter with dawning tints of the perfect day. From the dews of the night gleam the jewelled splendors of the morn. Flowers we saw not stand

revealed in their fragrance and beauty. Birds that were silent wake the glad world with their jubilee. Many are the joyous surprises that were curtained so near us in the gloom of darkness. Many are the glad revelations for us under the growing and glowing lights of love. Is it the breeze that rustles the tasselling corn, or the sweet flutter of angels' wings we hear? For surely, angels there are, strong souls, of pure and noble thought, inspired of God to lead us to higher, brighter, better levels—God-blessed spirits! And among them is Eugene Field. In spite of death's edict, he still lives, and always will live, in the hearts of men, casting

out the devils of darkness and opening to the angels of love the shutters of the soul."

Why should we be compelled to yield up the spirits that make earth brightest? Mayhap because they need and deserve the rest.

It has been said we can hear the bells of heaven ringing their morning matins, if we keep our hearts pure and our thoughts lifted above the things of earth.

Perchance this dreamer — this weaver of verse — when tired out with the care and busy round of life, laid him down to rest, with a heart bursting with songs yet unsung; and in the hush of the early morning, the sensitive soul caught

up the heavenly strain, and thus was borne beyond the bounds of earth into the region of eternal song ; and “ out yonder in God’s Acre ”—where the sunlight steals through rustling leaves to shower its kisses upon a bed of myrtle and daisies—flower-laden breezes whisper low this sweet refrain, “ Sleep ! O sleep ! ”

The children far and wide mourn for the dear one who sang them their sweetest lullabies ; motherhood grieves for her most ardent champion ; and these loyal lovers are searching far and wide for the ideals which inspired his sweet songs and for the real children who played with him at “ Booh ! ”





ROOM WHERE EUGENE FIELD WROTE.



We had best hunt for them in the large room where all the funny bottles are, the old tall clock, the half-worn baby shoes, and the door harp with its musical tinkling ; and there we may find little Roswell Francis, more familiarly known as Posy, with eyes fairly dancing and lovely mouth fluted into smiles. You may stop and wonder whether or no you have suddenly come upon some little gnome from fairy-land.

And when you meet Ruth Gray, or little "Sister-Girl," you will surely think you have found an elf strayed from elfland.

From the golden brown of his eyes, the sunshine of his hair, his

mother called little Roswell Francis her "Golden Son," and his father has perpetuated that name in his little story of "Sweet-One-Darling and the Moon Garden," the little sister being "Sweet-One-Darling."

They celebrated their third and fourth birthdays on the 24th of March, 1897. This joint birthday is ever a happy occasion for the two little ones. Both children are full of mischief and fun, and keep things pretty lively in the Field home.

It hardly seems just to attempt to cast the horoscope of these dear babies ; and yet there is in each of them a personality so striking and in keeping with the typical poet's



ROSWELL FRANCIS FIELD ("POSY").

Page 94.



child, that almost unconsciously we find ourselves talking of their future achievements.

A celebrated palmist read the little hands and said: "They both inherit talents out of the usual line," and that little "Sister-Girl" would have to write to give vent to her wonderful imagination. Surely she is her father's ideal "Little Mistress Sans Merci."

Posy, when not actively engaged in playing, usually carries a book, or an armful of books, hunting for someone to read to him. If he fails to find anyone, he will seat himself and repeat nearly all of the "Mother Goose Rhymes," and "The Night before Christmas."

When scarcely three and a half years old, he recited several of his father's poems so intelligently and with so much feeling that it brought tears to the eyes of all who heard him.

He has a marked love for animals, and already has quite a collection of animal books. When only fifteen months old, he knew the road that led to the animals' cages in Lincoln Park. A dear friend used to drive around on pleasant afternoons, and together we would beg the pleasure of taking this prince of babies down to the Park, and woe to us if we attempted to pass the road leading to the animals!

The colored coachman, Ben, so often carried the little fellow in his arms from the bears' den to all the various cages, that Ben became the hero of all his baby fancies ; whenever he saw him he would cry to go with him.

After his first visit to the animals, Posy was asked how the leopard went ? He immediately slipped from my lap and, crouching upon the floor, imitated the gnawing of a bone so vividly, it was pathetic in one so young. Upon being asked how the camel went, quick as thought he turned up his baby lip and made the peculiar motion of a camel chewing. In the same way he caught the names and most

striking characteristics of all the other animals.

About a year ago we took Posy to see the Buffalo Bill show, and since that time he has been playing Indian, and imitating the principal features of that interesting performance. Mounted on a large brown rocking-horse, dressed in leather leggings and short jacket, a real Mexican sombrero on his head, with eyes aflame with excitement and sunny curls flying, one might easily imagine him a miniature Buffalo Bill.

To give life to the scene, he tries to teach his baby sister to impersonate Annie Oakley and throw her rubber ball into the air, while he





"POSY" AS BUFFALO BILL.



fires at it shot after shot, in rapid succession, with his toy gun.

Not long ago he brought in a large weed that looked like a small tree, and said to his mamma, "It had a weasel on it when I cut it down," whereupon she remonstrated, telling him of the rapid movements of that little animal, saying, "Posy, I guess you did not do that." He insisted for the time, but later went to her and said, "It was not a weasel, Mamma, only a martin."

He has hosts of admirers, but is slow to make friends, and spends his happiest moments near his mother. The lines written by his father some years ago—

“Sometime there ben a lyttel boy  
That wold not renne and play,  
And, helpless like, that little tyke  
Ben allwais in the way.  
‘Goe, make you merrie with the rest,’  
His weary moder cried ;  
Bit with a frown he cotched her gown  
And hong untill her side ”—

might truthfully have been written of him.

In writing of these little ones, I cannot forbear repeating a conversation already published, which shows how the children still associate themselves with their father. I was reading aloud one of the many beautiful tributes written about him since his death, where it referred to him as the Chil-

dren's Laureate and the Poet of Childhood. Little Posy stood by with an intense look of interest upon his face, so I turned and asked "Who was the Children's Poet, dearie?" He looked up with such a satisfied expression, and replied, "Us"!

Ruth, or little "Sister-Girl," is unlike her brother, both in looks and temperament. She inherits the beautiful dark-blue eyes of her father, and the small, dainty features of her mother. She is tall for her age, and has a shapely head, crowned with golden hair. While a baby, her coloring was as delicate as a tea-rose, but summer suns have brought a deeper tinge to her

cheeks, and she is now quite the picture of health.

She fairly scintillates with life and animation, and her perceptions are like flashes of lightning ; in a word, she is by nature an impressionist, she never condescends to give you more than a hint of anything. Her voice is as sweet as a bird's, but she will only give you a snatch of the song. Her imagination is exceedingly vivid—I am afraid, far beyond the bounds of truth. She said to me not long ago, “Me deamed me had a nice bone and put it on the mantel, and my tandy mouse ate it all up.”

Motherhood has always been her highest ideal ; she has to be “lit-



RUTH GRAY FIELD ("SISTER GIRL").

Page 102.





tle mudder" to everything and everybody she plays with. When riding on the cars, if a baby is brought in, she immediately slips from her seat and goes to the baby and insists upon holding it, often when the child is nearly as large as herself; and she talks baby talk, entirely unconscious of the many eyes that are upon her.

These dear little ones write letters, and prattle and talk of their father as if he were momentarily expected; and it cannot be said the spirit and life went from home when he was called away. These speak from every room, from every book-shelf, from the quaint curios he gathered, and the simple com-

fort of all the surroundings ; and  
the dear place is lightened and  
brightened by his own heart's  
treasures.

“ He was the world's, no clime can claim  
him ;

The tongues of all the Nations name  
him ;

He was the world's and God's.—Behold,  
Where passed his presence clouds were  
rifting,

The lilies to the light were lifted,  
And glittered all the dust with gold.

“ He was a child, and, in his singing,  
The bells of childhood still were ring-  
ing ;

And childhood's roses bloom along  
The pleasant paths that smiled before  
him,

And the deep wings of love were o'er  
him,—

The love that sanctifies his song.

“And when the last sleep's mystery  
bound him,

The arms of deathless love were round  
him,

And so love laid him down to rest.

In life 't was his to know love's beauty,

To tread with love the path of duty,

In death to lie upon love's breast.”



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